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SOMETHING ALREADY GAINED IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE.

It is quite true that this cause has accomplished as yet only a small part of its great, arduous work; but it may be well to pause awhile, and see how much has in fact been done towards its eventual triumph.

1. The cause, then, is actually started, and a beginning fairly made. The object to be sought, the world-wide evil to be removed, is distinctly before the public, and a train of agencies and influences set at work to carry on this great reform; points of no little importance, and involving not a few pledges of future progress and final success.

2. The enterprise is thus rooted permanently in the general mind of Christendom as a grand, indispensable necessity in the world's onward career. It may fluctuate, now stationary, and now retrograde; but it is still fixed as a thing that can be, must be, and will be, by some means, secured sooner or later. The conviction of this as a fruit and promise of Christianity, and as an accompaniment of its progress among the nations, is becoming more and more general, deep and operative; and such an impression is a strong omen and pledge of its ultimate success.

3. There has, also, been gradually accumulating a vast amount of materials for the progress of this cause. There is no end to such facts, arguments and authorities already collected; and there is a wider growing disposition by the pulpit and the press, the school, the lyceum and the fireside to use them for this purpose. Here is a large gain of incidental auxiliaries.

4. Some impression, moreover, has already been confessedly made on the great evil we combat. There is a very perceptible, marked, most hopeful change for the better in the general modes of thought and feeling on the whole subject. Everybody must admit this; we see not how any degree of ignorance can overlook it, or any skepticism deny it.

5. Wars have, also, been less frequent, less protracted, and attended with fewer evils, if not to the combatants themselves, yet to the mass of the people, and the world at large. They are not so easily started, but more speedily brought to a close. Such a war as the recent one with Russia, would, fifty years ago, have begun one or two years sooner than it did, and continued, in all probability, ten or twenty years instead of only two. During its progress the general commerce, business and intercourse of the world were but slightly disturbed in comparison with former ages.

6. The custom of war, though continued in its main features as in centuries past, is still in a process of gradual, partial alleviation. It is disused far more frequently than heretofore, and some of its worst practices, such as privateering, and kindred usages, have been abolished in form by the late Peace Congress of Europe; a gain to the world's permanent welfare, worth a thousand times over all that the friends of peace have ever spent on this cause.

7. A kin to these facts are the various meliorations going on in the Law of Nations, all tending to diminish the frequency and the actual evils of war.

8. There is, likewise, a growing disposition to supersede war entirely by such substitutes as occasional or permanent arbitration for the settlement of all future difficulties between nations. We have already negotiated three or four important treaties, more or less, on this principle; it is coming to be adopted, more and more, by governments in the adjustment of their controversies; and the recent Congress at Paris, through the special intervention of the friends of peace for the purpose, distinctly recognized and recommended it as the future policy of all Europe.

9. To all this add the very significant and comprehensive fact that, from the origin of special efforts in this cause, the general peace of Europe was preserved for nearly forty years, a longer peace than she had ever enjoyed before. We might quote similar facts; but this we may take to include them all.

Now, if such facts as these do not prove progress in the cause of peace, we beg to know what ever can prove it. What do the skeptics on this subject demand? If nearly half a century of general peace were used to be almost incessant war, the explicit, final abolition of some of its worst usages by all Europe, the public and decided recommendation by its leading powers of such peaceful substitutes for war as stipulated arbitration, and the actual adoption by a few governments of this expedient in place of the sword with fair prospects of success — if such facts do not prove that something, a great deal, has already been accomplished, it must be because we have to encounter on this subject such habits of skepticism as are tolerated on no other. On any kindred enterprise, like temperance or missions, a mere fraction of the proofs we have adduced, would be amply sufficient.

We know very well how the force of all such facts is neutralized to certain minds; but we can at present say no more than just to declare anew our full, settled belief, that no enterprise of either reform or benevolence has ever done more good, in proportion to the means used, than the cause of peace; that it never had better opportunities or prospects of success, than it has at this hour; and that every possible view of the case demands of its friends a large increase of liberality and zeal. Nothing else is requisite under God for its sure, steady and permanent progress; but our friends should bear in mind, and act on the principle, that the means of his appointment are just as indispensable in this cause as in any other. The world can be converted to Christianity without such means just as well as it can be turned and trained to peace without them.